Volume 1, Number 8
:: :: October, 1925 ::

8 Via S. Nicola da Tolentino, Rome (30), Italy ::

ACIES ORDINATA

THE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REVIEW
ISSUED BY THE
:: :: CENTRAL SECRETARIATE OF SODALITIES OF OUR LADY :: ::

For circulation among Ours only

Present State of Our Sodalities

What follows is an excerpt from an account prepared by a Father whose opinions carry great weight and who is gifted with great ability for direction. Naturally, he wrote of the state of the Sodalities in his own country, but his observations will be useful for all, because the Sodalities elsewhere suffer the same evils, and a comparison with conditions existing in the reader's nation cannot fail to be illuminating.

Growth of Sodalities after 1904. No one can deny that the Sodalities of Our Lady benefited very much by the solemn celebrations which were held the world over on the 50th anniversary of the definition of the Immaculate Conception. That effect was clearly seen in this country and manifested itself especially in the large number of new Sodalities founded, and in the happy return of many others to the primitive and genuine form which brought forth such excellent fruits in the old-time Sodalities of Mary.

Number of true Sodalities uncertain. However, one would be easily misled as to the number of existing Sodalities were he to rely simply on the official aggregations which are recorded in the Curia at Rome. Many of the older Sodalities registered there ceased to exist many years ago, and not a few of them have gradually become organizations of a different sort, such as Associations for prayer in common, Sporting Clubs, Recreation centers, etc.

Two Classes of Sodalities. Then, if we examine the Sodalities which still retain the name and character of the Sodality of Mary, we will find that they can be put into two classes, *the less numerous* embracing those Sodalities which under the influence of the latest instructions and exhortations of Very Rev. Fr. General Wernz, have brought themselves more and more to the genuine type of the Sodality of Mary, which requires and promotes in its members a Christian perfection more than ordinary, and an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls finding expression in works of charity and mercy. *The other* and far more numerous class comprises those Sodalities which to save young people from the imminent dangers threatening their souls, aim at the *greatest possible membership* and, being content with a lower degree of spirituality, require only the exercise of an ordinary Christian life, the frequent reception of the Sacraments and the hearing of Mass on all days of obligation.

We ought to see if these laxer Sodalities which lay-people practically confound with Sunday Schools, devotional organizations, clubs, etc., should be promoted in some way, or should be clearly designated as without the scope of our Sodalities (which does not lie in preserving the faith of Sodalists in one way or other, but in fostering a lively spirit of Christian perfection adapted to their circumstances and state in life).

Sodalities in the writer's country

In our colleges, until recent times, the Sodality often existed only as a formality, since almost all the students in the higher classes *were obliged* by custom to become Sodalists. Thanks be to God, the last few years have seen some improvement in some colleges at least, where the Sodalists are *chosen* from the best students and have their own meetings in which they are seriously exhorted to the practice of the Christian virtues, and where, circumstances permitting, they engage in some charitable work, such as teaching Christian Doctrine classes in parish churches, collecting money for foreign missions, promoting the Apostleship of Prayer, etc.

Pious and Social Works. Those Sodalities therefore which followed most closely the instructions of Very Rev. Fr. Wernz, and so used extraordinary diligence in promoting the genuine spirit of the Sodality, have given the best examples of Christian piety and charity toward their neighbor. There have been Sodalities, too, which have received courses of lectures on *Sociology*. Nevertheless, it must be confessed that our Sodalities of today are far inferior to those of early days, the members of which generously exercised their charity in hospitals and jails, as is evidenced by their archives.

In some of our modern Sodalities, a feeble attempt has been made to introduce the *Conference of St. Vincent de Paul* but the number of such Sodalities is very small.

Need of rules for charitable works. It would be well if the Central Secretariate would establish some definite rules so that this charitable activity might be carried on properly and constantly by such Sodalities as manifest a desire of living to the full the life proper to the Sodality. It is also desirable to have indicated *what charitable works* are most in accord with the spirit of the Sodality and best adapted to the needs of our day, and besides *what social works* can be safely engaged in by Sodalists without detriment to that spirit.

As to **Sections,** only a very few Sodalities have really adopted them, notwithstanding the mention of such and such a "Section" which appears at times in their letters to the official organ of the Sodality. The reason may be that what a Section is, what it is good for, and how it may be organized, are points utterly unknown to many Directors.

Direction of Sodalities

As regards **Directors,** recalling the many exhortations of Our Fathers General on the necessity of assigning to the work men truly distinguished for zeal and other apostolic qualities, the following points might be considered :

1. **Directors changed too often.** It often happens that Directors are changed every year. On this point, Very Rev. Fr. Wernz wrote :

"The reason why our Sodalities so often deceive our hopes is that their Directors are changed so often" (Can. 4, Nov. 1909).

Superiors therefore should be respectfully besought to avoid this practice as far as possible, since it renders the formation of good Directors impossible.

2. **Overburdened Directors.** It often happens in our Colleges, that the position of Sodality Director even for extern students is assigned to a man who is already burdened with several important offices ; whence it is very hard for him to give the Sodality the care it merits. In the case of boarders' Sodalities, the detriment is less, but it is very great indeed when extern Sodalists are concerned.

3. **Study of successful Sodalities.** It is necessary that Directors take more pains to learn how activity is exercised by truly exemplary Sodalities both of their own and foreign countries, so that their own Sodalists may be instructed and roused to greater fervor by such examples. This knowledge of each others' experience will tend to preserve the Sodalities of Our Lady in their own proper sphere and spirit and will distinguish them clearly from other confraternities and associations which are doing good work in the Church. This can easily be effected through periodicals of which we shall speak later on.

As to the **Officers**, it is to be noted that in many Sodalities, they are practically reduced to so many figureheads, utterly without influence on the activity of the Sodality. *Consultations* are seldom or never held.

The natural result is that all the duties are improperly piled on the Director who, while he should have general supervision over everything, should by no means do all by himself. The secret of success is to have the members exercise their activity as it were spontaneously and along lines peculiar to the Sodality.

Causes of success

1. **Exact Observance.** The causes of success are ordinarily reducible to the exact observance of all the *customs* and of all the *exercises* peculiar to the Sodalities of Mary and prescribed in their Statutes and Rules, especially those promulgated by Very Rev. Fr. Wernz which are most adapted to the character and necessities of our times.

2. **Good Directors.** Another evident cause of success is the aptitude of the Director himself for his charge, and while this is in part dependent on his own character, in many respects it is the fruit of personal experience. Hence it is very desirable that such as give promise of doing well in this important post of Director, should be employed at first as assistants of a very experienced Director and in this way gain the proper experience.

3. **Directors occupied only with Direction.** Success is rarely wanting to a Sodality if its Director is sufficiently qualified and is not distraught with other cares, so that he can concentrate all his zeal on the Sodality, instituting Sections, promoting charitable activities, and guiding individual

Sodalists in the path of perfection. Such work requires all a man's strength and energy, and he should be considered well employed when he is wholly taken up in a work so important in itself and so becoming to the Society.

4. **One Director suffices.** There are on the other hand Sodalities which we may call "privileged", which flourish and give splendid result, because they have not only an excellent Director, but also a Vice-Director and several assistants. Such Sodalities for obvious reasons cannot be regarded as models *in this respect*. For a well organized, well-founded Sodality of Mary should fulfil its purpose and fully attain its end with the help of a single Director, who knows how to make good use of the helps which the Rules give him, i. e., the Prefects and Consultors, the Major and Minor Officers. If nevertheless, through the goodness of God, other help is to be had from good priests and well-intentioned laymen, use should be made of it to increase the efficiency of the Sodality, but it should not be regarded as necessary to the proper conduct and progress of the Sodality.

5. **Sections.** Another cause of success is often found in the proper and effective organization of the Sections. As was said above, the Sections with us are often nothing more than a formality with almost no influence on the life of the Sodality; while on the contrary, if the Sections are alive and active, their effectiveness is very great not only in their special field, but in the whole life and activity of the Sodality itself. Ours therefore ought to be better posted on what has been done with foreign Sodalities, especially in Spain.

Causes of failure

1. **Frequent change of Directors.** Everybody in our province is acquainted with a Sodality of educated young men which was formerly very flourishing, but which on account of too frequent changes of Directors (it had three in one year) is almost entirely defunct.

2. **Incorrect notion of the Sodality.** In the case of Sodalities established outside our churches and colleges and under the direction of secular priests, the cause of failure is often the confusion between the genuine concept of the Sodality of Our Lady and that of Oratories, Clubs for recreation, and other Catholic societies; whence it follows that the inner strength of the Sodality which lies entirely in the study of Christian perfection, in an extraordinary exercise of the virtues and especially of charity towards one's neighbor and in the frequent use of the Sacraments, fails little by little, and is turned to other works which are good in themselves but not so well fitted to the Sodality.

Sodality publications

Periodicals. It must be confessed that in spite of not a little labor on the part of many persons and notwithstanding the expenditure of great sums of money, there is still something lacking to our Sodality magazine to make it attractive to young people. What that something is, it would take considerable time and space to discuss, but we may make the following observations:

1. There should be articles which would definitely inform Directors and Sodalists on the proper formation of Sections and on the principal features of Sodality life.

2. All articles should be written in a lively modern style, so that young people accustomed to that style will read them.

As to **other publications,** the following seem to be called for:

1. A Manual for Directors.
2. A Commentary on the Rules.
3. A Sodality Ritual printed in large type for use in churches.
4. Rules and Statutes of the different Sections.

Relations of the Sodality with other Societies

Up to the present, the only question of this sort which has arisen has been that on the relation with the Catholic Youth Association, and Very Rev. Fr. Wernz, with the consent of the Director General of that Association, determined that it was not fitting for the Sodalities as such to enter it, but that we should encourage individual Sodalists who were old enough and otherwise fit, to enter the Association.

Editor's Note

Similar accounts of the condition of the Sodalities in various countries were written three years ago for the Directors' Congress held in Rome. It will be very helpful if similar accounts be prepared in all countries so that it may appear whether there has been any progress in these last three years and whether the desires then entertained have been realized. The usefulness of the examination of conscience is not confined to the interior lives of individuals, but extends also to the orderly and constant development of apostolic activity and the removal of defects and impediments thereunto.

Evidence Movement

In my former articles there has not been room for detailed description of the **growth of the Catholic Evidence Guild** in Great Britain, because it appeared desirable, when bringing the matter before Directors of Sodalities, to deal at first with general principles rather than with facts and figures. Yet those who are even beginning to feel interest in the subject will undoubtedly require tangible evidence of the real progress of the Movement, and will ask *what signs it shows of permanence and utility*. With regard to the latter it cannot be too often or too emphatically stated that the actual conversions, more or less frequent, which can be attributed to the Guild Methods are not the true index of their importance. All who from the start have laboured in the field or in preparing others to take the field, have asserted constantly that while visible results may be precious, the greater results are even more precious although invisible. *The true significance of this Movement* is that it heralds a new epoch in the relations of the Catholic religion in this country to its surroundings. That is to say, the Guild works so to change the position of the Church in the eyes of our people, that it may be possible for her to come into closer contact with them.

The results ultimately obtained will be therefore, as we hope, much larger than making a handful of converts which would be pratically negligible as compared with the nation. The Guild workers believe that **they are planting a seed** of which the harvest may and should be plentiful, but it cannot be now.

From such a standpoint, it will be seen that **the real criterion of success** is, not the number of converts, but *the spread of the Movement.* The multiplication of platforms may be taken as a measure of the confidence which Catholics are beginning to feel in the work of the Guild and in the prospect of its ultimate success.

Now we have stated in a previous paper that the work has been spreading, not perhaps as rapidly as had been expected, but yet very steadily and surely. And the only way to make this clear is to tabulate facts of history.

We must distinguish the periods. **The initial expansion** of the work, no doubt owing to a wave of enthusiasm which marked the end of the War, was indeed surprising. Within about 5 months of the establishment of study classes by the Cardinal Archbishop, in April 1918, Father Hugh Pope, O. P., always a leading spirit in the development of the Guild, announced that the attendance already averaged 50 weekly. In October of the same year, there were at least four Pitches kept going by the Westminster speakers. **In the next two years,** the development was fairly encouraging. At a conference held in Liverpool in August 1920, it was stated that in London alone there were 9 different Pitches with meetings weekly or oftener. It was computed that by now the weekly attendance of speakers or would-be speakers at the various study-classes in London averaged over 300. About the date of this Conference, not merely Liverpool, but other important cities, as Cardiff, Birmingham, and Plymouth, began to move. In all cases the Bishops were eager to see the work proceed, and hopes were formed, (somewhat exaggerated as events have proved) of a rapid development in the Provinces.

It cannot be denied that **the difficulties** were found to be heavier than was anticipated. Only by slow degrees has the work been spreading, but insensibly the feeling has been growing everywhere that the Guild is necessary and is destined ultimately to effect great things. Yet as compared with the original impulse, when the novelty of the work was something fresh and many were jumping et conclusions without counting the cost, some disappointment has been felt till comparatively recently. *In the Metropolis* indeed the ardour constantly displayed by the organizers and members of the Guild has been beyond all praise, and all throughout one could hardly note any abatement of enthusiasm, even though it now takes the form of grappling with hard conditions.

Zeal unabated. In spite of many misunderstandings and greater apathy on the part of vast numbers of Catholics, there has not been any sign of slackening of zeal or activity on the part of workers. This is also true of the Provinces in a modified sense, for in a few places the Guild is really all that it could be, and all that its pioneers claimed that it ought to be. Yet there is much to be done even in important centres where the matter has been talked of for several long years.

Before proceeding to further figures as to the present position, I should like to point out that **the lead taken by London** throughout, is really a most salutary thing. In cases of this kind it is right and natural that power should be created in the centre and spread to the circumference. In this way *truly national character* of the whole affair is made clear. In the opposite supposition, namely that the movement had started in the country and not in London, the obstacles to the spread of the movement might have proved insurmountable. What has happened is fully normal, and will in the end prove to be quite all right. Gigantic tasks necessarily require much patience. There is the old adage of 'Rome was not built in a day', and there is the patent fact that 'Rome' – and not less Roman Catholics – are slow to learn and to change. As a matter of fact the mission of the Guild is by no means to non-Catholics only, or – I might perhaps add – chiefly. And many of us hope that England, with her bad Protestant record, is to give a lead to other nations. She did it with her Catholic Scouts, and she did it with her Knights and Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Caholic Truth Society. In how many ways too has America pointed out the path of the future!

Now to take **London** first, there are it is computed not less than 50 pitches in full activity. Of these 31 to 33 are in Westminster diocese; 6 in Brentwood; and over 10 in Southwark. At these points meetings are held at least weekly; a few have meetings more than one a week; while Hyde Park, the chief centre, has them 6 evenings in the week, and practically all day on Sunday. The numbers in London would be far grea-

ter were there more speakers; for in all directions there are invitations, some of them urgent, from the clergy to labour in their several parishes. So far there are from 120 to 130 speakers in Westminster alone, and many more are being trained. This does not include the priests who take the Platform. More than a dozen speak occasionally, and about half of these more or less regularly according to circumstances. A Dominican Friar gave a Retreat in Hyde Park during the whole of Holy Week of this year and of last year. The lay-speakers may only take subjects on which they have been previously tested by authorized examiners, one of whom is a priest. The number of speakers with a Universal Licence is small.

This in London. **In the country**, as I have indicated, there is still much to hope for, but a distinct advance is of late very noticeable.

To take some of the best dioceses first. Among them are Salford; Liverpool; Leeds; Scheffield; Nottingham: (including Nottingham itself, Derby, Leicester, and Grimsby); Wolverhampton in Birmingham dioecese. Plymouth is also fairly good; and Reading and York, not large towns, are promising. In Lancashire generally there is a decided improvement. Bolton, Warrington Wigan, and Stonyhurst are working well – in addition to Manchester and Liverpool, both with their suburbs. Birmingham city made a good start, but has been sadly handicapped by various accidents. Fr. Hugh Pope's assistance as Director has however proved invaluable. Some of the Guilds, even of those mentioned, rely too much upon outside help (i. e. visitors from neighbouring Guilds) to be classed as truly efficient. Everywhere, even in large cities, such as Cardiff and Portsmouth (where training classes are in operation), the great difficulty is *the shortage of speakers*, and sometimes the impossibility of finding priests to train them. Not all the clergy are equally favourable to the movement, some even oppose it, and even when they are anxious to do their best, the difficulty of finding the necessary leisure is enormous.

I have not mentioned all the separate Provincial centres. The last Report gave them as 23; but some others have been or are being since founded. For instance in my last article, I gave good news from Newcastle-on-Tyne, where recently quite a number of priests came forward with a promise both to train and to take their place among the speakers. This is the case of a Guild long founded, but hitherto not really flourishing. Then we hear of a new Diocesan Council for Nottingham – an important lead which may produce great results. The most important feature in the recent 'moving of the waters' is the fact that Lancashire is now taking her place as by far the most Catholic county in England, also as the most important Provincial area in Guild-work. We have just learned that Liverpool is running 4 and Manchester 5 Pitches. At first the Movement was remarkable as appertaining to the South; a change appears to be rapidly setting in, and soon it may be that the South will be favourably reacted upon by the North. This is greatly to be desired.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

Reception of old Sodalists. " We are going to celebrate the golden jubilee of our Young Men's Sodality in the near future, and we are thinking of inviting the older men, who were formerly active members, not-only to take part in the celebration, but to return from the " pensioned " to the " active " list. We wish to tell them that in reality there is no such degree in the Sodality as that of " honorary " Sodalist, but that whoever has been once admitted to the Sodality and not dismissed, is bound to the Sodality for life, and should both attend the usual meetings and take part in apostolic activities. Do you approve our plan ? ".

Answer. In substance, we do approve it, but as to the method, a distinction must be made.

It is certain that the Rules of the Sodality do not recognize " honorary " Sodalists. All who were once properly admitted, remain Sodalists for good, unless they were dismissed, or left of their own accord; and they are bound by their promise to keep the rules and live the life of the Sodality. Therefore they should return and be received, even though they have been absent from all Sodality functions for years.

Two cautions, however, should be observed in receiving them back.

First: They should not be definitely received back until they have successfully passed a period of trial and probation.

Secondly: They should not ordinarily be admitted to the very same Sodality, since it is for *young* men. In an exceptional case, an adult might be admitted to a Young Men's Sodality for a good reason (as the Rules and the Summary of Indulgences and Privileges, n. 25, indicate). Nevertheless in the generality of cases experience proves the wisdom of keeping to the 4th Rule which states that the organization of the Sodality " is best kept and its ends are most efficaciously reached if separate Sodalities are established for separate classes of people differing in age, state or condition of life ". Besides, the direction to be given a Sodality of young men from 15 to 25 years of age will hardly be adapted to old married men. The same is true of the apostolic work.

Hence, we conclude, these older men should, after due probation, be admitted to a Sodality fitted for them. If no such Sodality exist, one should be established, and in the meantime, these men might be organized as a particular section or division of the Young Men's Sodality. In this way the abuse of " honorary " Sodalists will be avoided, unless one wishes to reserve the title for those who must be quietly shelved on account of disparity of age or incorrigible disinclination to apostolic work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Rev. Carlos D. Simons, S. J., Mt. St. Michael's Hillyard, Wash., U. S. A., 5 doll. Rev. Thos. F. Ryan, S. J., Belvedere College, Dublin, Ireland, 10 s.

CHRONICLE

Father Elder Mullan, S. J., died at Philadelphia, Pa., early in July. The Sodality movement owes very much to his tireless industry in the composition of the "*History of the Prima Primaria Sodality*" and "*The Sodality of Our Lady Studied in the Documents*". The latter has been translated into several languages and is a veritable mine of authentic information.

Father Mullan's interest in the Sodality continued unabated after his departure from the Curia of the Society in Rome. All who knew him will recognize his solid religious spirit in the following words which occur in a letter of his to the Editor of the *Acies Ordinata:*

"I do hope something *pronounced* will be done to emphasize the spiritual work of the Sodality. Father Fiter's principle was, first the spiritual formation of the members and then the external works; these would follow as a natural result of the spiritual formation".

To encourage meditation and spiritual reading on the part of the Sodalists, Father Mullan published "*The Sodalist's Imitation of Christ*" — a very careful revision of an English translation which thoroughly reproduces the spirit of the original and by copying its rhythmical structure, invites to meditation. Other worthy monuments to the methodical laboriousness of Father Mullan are "*The Morning Watch*", a translation of Father Diertin's *Spiritual Exercises* and a close translation of the original Spanish text of the "*Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*".

The American Sodality Pilgrimage. From the 1st to the 11th of August, the Sodality Pilgrimage from the United States directed by Ours, was present in the Eternal City. The first section comprising 300 members, was under the general leadership of Rev. Michael. A. Clark, S. J., President of St. Francis Xavier's College, 16th Street, New York; and the second numbering 200, had at its head Rev. Joseph P. O' Reilly,S. J., of St Joseph's Church, Willings Alley, Philadelphia, Pa.

August 5th, the majority of the Sodalists were present at a Mass celebrated by **Very Rev. Father General** in St. Ignatius Church, where the Sodality began its existence. Appropriate hymns were sung by the Sodalists during the Mass, and all went to Holy Communion. After a short thanksgiving Very Rev. Father General graciously distributed a commemorative medal to each of the pilgrims.

As the American Sodalities had undertaken over a year ago to provide a fund of **30.000** doll. **for the building of a Museum** for the Catacombs, Mgr. Belvedere, President of the Archeological Commission charged with the work by His Holiness, issued a very pressing invitation to the Sodality pilgrims to hear Mass in the fourth century basilica of Saints Nereus and Achilleus, situated in the Catacombs of St. Domitilla. The invitation was gladly accepted and it was arranged that this Mass should be accounted as part of the good works incident to gaining the Jubilee Indulgence.

On August 7, all were privilegedto be present at a low **Mass celebrated by the Holy Father** in the Pauline chapel which extends over the portico of St. Peter's and whence the present Holy Father blessed the crowd assembled in the piazza on the day of his election.

At the **public audience,** the pilgrims were presented by Rt. Rev. Samuel A. Stritch, DD., Bishop of Toledo, Ohio. The Directors and Chaplains of the pilgrimage immediately presented their gifts to the Holy Father, consisting principally in a donation of 500 dollars on the part of those present and some elegantly bound lists of the names of such American Sodalists as have thus far contributed to the Catacombs Museum Building. These lists were prepared by the different Provinces of the Society in the United States.

Father Tracy of Philadelphia, was the bearer of a check for 1,000 dollars accompanied by a letter to the Pope from the donor, **a woman Sodalist,** in which she related that after having saved the money to pay her expenses on the pilgrimage to Rome, she happened to read an article on the extreme poverty of the Russian seminarians, and knowing the Holy Father's great wish to favor that nation, she determined to sacrifice her own desires and donate the money for the seminarians

As the Holy Father passed from pilgrim to pilgrim, very **distinguished Sodalists** were indicated to him; one of these was Dr. William Walsh with whose books the Holy Father declared himself well acquainted.

Having thus greeted individually each of the pilgrims, **His Holiness in an enthusiastic discourse** from his throne began by expressing his joy at seeing so many pilgrims before him, and this more particularly considering the length of the voyage, its attendant sacrifices and discomforts, and the zeal for their own souls which prompted the pilgrims to come so far to visit the Common Father, to see the holy places and to gain the Jubilee.

But when there was question of the **Sodality of Our Lady,** his joy was far greater because he was well acquainted with that Sodality which under the direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus brings forth such rich fruits of Christian life. Those present brought to his mind's eye the vast army of Sodalists intent on the care of their own souls and engaged in the apostolate of charity, the apostolate of the word and of prayer, and above all the apostolate of good example, — in a word, the presentation to the world of a finished type of Christian life and manners.

He knew well what they had done for an object very dear to his heart, **the Catacombs.** Some had been present at the Holy Mass in the ancient basilica of Sts. Nereus and Achilleus (the latter is the Holy Father's baptismal patron) and the rest would soon follow their example. "*You love the catacombs and you have done well by them!*" It was proof enough to consider the generous contributions already made and those which were promised for the near future.

After other expressions of his lively gratitude and pleasure, the Holy Father continued with an animated description of the importance of the Catacombs as irrefragable documentary *evidence of the truth* of the Catholic religion and particularly of such points as were

controverted by the heretics of the 16th century. All that is glorious in the basilicas and other monuments of Christian piety under the sky of Rome have their roots in the Catacombs. There is to be seen the cult of the Blessed Sacrament, piety and devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, the Communion of Saints. All the substantial practices of Christian devotion find their documentation in the Catacombs. So that they should serve as unerring guides to all those without the Church.

Finally, the Holy Father set out the extent of the blessing he was about to give. It was to include not only all those present and such objects of devotion as they might have with them, but it was to embrace all the persons dear to them, the Sodalities with which they were connected, their projects, resolutions, etc.

A faithful interpretation of the Holy Father's Italian discourse was then given by His Lordship Bishop Stritch. The blessing followed and as the Holy Father left the hall the pilgrims sang "*Holy God We praise Thy Name*". His Holiness paused at the threshold for a few moments with evident signs of pleasure.

The next day, at the Catacombs of St. Domitilla, special medals sent by His Holiness for those who had contributed to the Catacombs Museum Building, were distributed.

At last, on the morning of the 11th of August, the pilgrims left the Eternal City. Besides Rome, other holy places such as Lisieux, Lourdes and Paray-le-Monial were visited. But *six days* in Rome, rich as it is in relics and memories of the Saints and other evidences of the Church's greatness, are quite insufficient; *ten days* is rather the minimum for a stay in Rome.

Catholic Evidence Guild and College Sodalities

The beginning of the Scholastic year is an excellent time for Directors of School Sodalities to consider the advisability of encouraging some of the Sodalists to prepare for the Guild platform. It is now about two years since the Guild was introduced into Stonyhurst and already several students have appeared on public platforms.

Good points for consideration are contained in letters addressed to the Central Secretariate.

Father Ralph Baines who was Master at Stonyhurst in the school year 1923-24, writes:

"When every branch of literature and every platform are debating the Fundamentals of our Holy Religion and its History, I feel that for the safety of the individual and for the wider spreading of the Gospel, a high standard of apologetical knowledge among Catholics themselves, is of the first importance".

*** "The Guild stimulated interest in apologetical studies to an almost incredible extent (at Stonyhurst). So much so that at the Inter-Collegiate Apologetical Examination, which is conducted by the English Catholic Hierarchy for Catholic Secondary Schools, the Stonyhurst boys just "swept the board" — securing 1st. 2d and 4th places, and 11 places out of the first 20."

*** "Speaking quite generally, the mainspring of it all is the *very live zeal* that exists in the hearts of our Catholic boys. They all want to do something for Our Lord — if they could only know what it is they can do. C. E. G. work appeals to them because it is some thing they can do "*right now*" — not something they may resolve to do in middle life. *** I shall never forget one little fellow aged 16, who when he had won a certificate qualifying him to speak on his subject, let slip the words.

"*How 'ripping' to feel that one can do something for the Faith!*"

Any Director who fears that the Guild will make for *activity* alone to the detriment of the spirit, will be agreeably surprised to see the depth and solidity of the interior spirit inculcated by the Guild in its official *Handbook*.

Father M. C. D'Arcy who spent a year at Stonyhurst writes:

"It (the Guild) seems to me the long sought for *completion to our education in England*, — the top dressing. Boys get thoroughly interested in their religion and intellectually so. They gain an extraordinarily sound and far reaching knowledge of theology, begin to study the New Testament, and can talk interestingly and well on Catholic points to friends and chance acquaintances, as well (of course) as being able to speak clearly and convincingly in public."

*** "I see in it even the beginnings of that *Catholic culture* which has not had a chance for so long, as boys are bound nowadays, through examination, etc., to imbibe the somewhat pagan culture of the modern world."

"When even one boy has been persuaded to go to the Guild, meet people there and finally to speak, having once undergone fire, be becomes *an enthusiast.*"

*** "In starting, naturally an able and keen *master of the Guild* must be chosen. His third quality must be patience or perseverance. He is bound to meet ups and downs. Boys will take some time acquiring the right spirit — as a body. Some will call it silly, others make it a joke. Some won't know their own capabilities. The Community will be hot and cold. The Prefect of Studies will object that it is interfering with studies. To gain him and others, use free time as a rule, try and get him to join it up with the top curriculum of Religious Instruction, though not so as to deprive the Guild of its independence. If possible, prove its utility in examinations."

Certainly when one considers that the boys who engage in the Guild work take up a comprehensive subject such as *infallibility*, write a short statement of the doctrine, consider objections, examine various authors, consult priests, etc., one sees that the amount of study and preparation is often greater than that of the average seminarian. When one adds to all this preparation the fact that it is continued and perfected under the fire of objections and criticism, speaking on one's feet, answering questions and returning to one's original train of thought, it becomes apparent that aside from the strong intellectual hold acquired upon the faith, much valuable experience is gained for public life. Assuredly such students will not later on suffer the humiliation of being forced to remain silent when incorrect statements or inquiries are made about the Catholic faith. This very sureness of doctrine and readiness in presenting and defending it, will render the exercise of zeal a pleasure and thus go far to making such fortunate students *real apostles.*

Father Baines gave a full account of the work at Stonyhurst in "*Letters and Notices*" for October 1924, and in the "*Stonyhurst Magazine*" for 1924-25, there are helpful notes prepared by the Student-Secretary of the Guild.

OVER THE TELEPHONE

Father, my Sodalities of Men and Boys have no initiative and are quite dependent on me in spite of all my efforts.

Suppose you select the leading spirit and take him as a companion on some of your visits to the poor. Later, when some help must be given them, get him to deliver it as a favor to you. The sight of misery and the pleasure incident to relieving it (even though it be done in another's name) may start your young man on a voluntary course of charitable work. Being a natural leader, as I suppose, he will undoubtedly induce others to follow his example, and thus after a time, you may see the desired activity among your Sodalists.

Consultation with your officers will be useful too.

Father, I really cannot attend to my Sodality because my time is taken up with reclaiming individuals and giving individual instruction to prospective converts.

Well, I know a very successful instructor who groups his catechumens into classes and thus saves time and labor.

Again, would it not prove more profitable in the long run to drop some of this work with individuals and try to cultivate helpers among the better educated members of your Sodality? Get others to work and thus you will multiply yourself. Catechumens must learn much by memory. Might they not give an account of this part of their study to some of your Sodalists while reserving difficulties for their conference with your Reverence?

The Men's Sodality here is quite defunct. The men themselves complain that the Sodality is for the "elite" and the complainants are not the "elite" and want some organization for the "non-elite".

If I had my way, I would rope them all into the Sodality, but keep an inner circle and thus remain within the letter of the law.

If by "*elite*" your men mean the higher or richer classes, they are mistaken about the Sodality; it is equally for the rich and the poor. Perhaps the difficulty in your parish has arisen from having men of widely different classes in the Sodality. If so, the present sentiment of those men shows the practical wisdom of the Sodality rule which demands separate Sodalities where the members are grouped according to their state in life.

If, however, "*elite*" stands for those who wish to lead a life of more than ordinary perfection and to work for the good of their neighbor, temporal and spiritual, those men are certainly right. Of such is the Sodality. No others should be admitted to it; no others retained.

If the men do not wish to enter or remain in the Sodality thus properly understood, very well. There are many other organizations in the Church with different requirements answering to the legitimate aspirations of the bulk of our Catholic men. Let them enter such a body. Thus you will avoid forcing your men into a Sodality with whose aims and practices they have no sympathy, and if proper candidates present themselves, you can have a genuine Sodality and there will be no vexations arising from an "*inner circle*".

Without disparaging other societies, you can upon occasion show the difference between them and the Sodality. It is not to be expected that the bulk of Catholics will enter the Sodality. All do not enter upon the life of perfection in religious orders, and the Sodality is a school of perfection in the world. Exhibit the Sodality in this light to your congregation, direct it on this basis, and while the number of Sodalists may never be great, they will deserve the name.

Sodalists' Appeal From Bengal.

The prefects and assistants of the sodalities of our schoolgoing boys and girls in Bengal (India) are sending to their fellow-Sodalists in Europe and America a petition letter destined to call on their help towards the success of a big mission which is about to start in various northern dioceses of India. This mission given to some 200.000 Indian Catholics and 50.000 pagans almost ready for conversion, is to include 50 retreats and more than 500 smaller missions.

Our Bengal sodalists have taken this mission to heart as a special token of their love for Our Lady. They will contribute to it in several ways; at present, as a preparation for its success, they are trying toga ther in as many Communions and sacrifices as possible.

We hope to explain later on in this review the various other means by which Sodalists will help us effectively in this ministry; and the result produced on the schools by this initiation into the apostolate, viz, the general spirit of the school, the works of zeal and the fostering of vocations. The efficacy of this initiation has already been tested, with good results, in some of our schools in India.

The Rectors of those colleges to which the prefects and assistants of our Bengal sodalities are sending the above mentioned letter would greatly encourage them by allowing their own boys to read the letter and answer its appeal.

Should this mission prove a success, as it undoubtedly will, we intend to try and extend the spiritual activity of our Sodalists to other dioceses, with the cooperation of our Sodalists, we will do our best to create, if possible, new movements of conversions.

A CORRESPONDENT WRITES:

It seems to me the great problem is to deal with the *loss of souls amongst the poor.*

Many children educated in our elementary schools leave the practice of the faith very soon after leaving school.

In my district, certainly, there are streets and streets of poor Catholics utterly ignorant and indifferent and ashamed to come to church. I know of a parish where 2,500 persons are on the books while many others are unlisted. But only 800 attend Mass on ordinary Sundays and 1,000 on Easter. But where are the other 1,500?

The Sodality doesn't touch this problem. One feels that it is selfish since it does not help the great masses.

If the Sodality could attack this great evil in our cities, it would be worth its salt, but it needs organization and the awakening of the Sodality conscience.

OPERARIUS

Editor: *Lawrence E. O'Keeffe, S. J.*
Superiorum permissu.

Printed by the « Tip. Campitelli » V. Orazio Coclite, 50 A - Roma